THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY
ON NOVEMBER 22, 1963, AT DALLAS, TEXAS

Statement of Special Agent Paul E. Landis, Jr., United States Secret Service, concerning his activities and official duties on November 22, 1963.

On November 22, 1963, I arrived at Love Field Airport, Dallas, Texas, at 11:35 a.m., having traveled from Ft. Worth, Texas, to Dallas, Texas, on board U. S. Air Force Flight #6970. Upon my arrival I disembarked from the aircraft and immediately walked to where the motorcade vehicles were parked. Special Agent Sam Kinney was the first person that I recognized, and I remember speaking to him and standing by the Follow-up car and jokingly asking him if he could tell me where the Follow-up car was.

After speaking to Sam, I walked over to Special Agent Win Lawson just to double check to see if I was still assigned to working the Follow-up car as had previously been arranged. He was standing by the front right fender of the car in which the President would be riding, and he told me that I was still to ride in the Follow-up car.

Only a very few moments later the President's Aircraft was pulling up to its mooring spot and I moved up to where I would be near the President and First Lady when they disembarked from the aircraft.

There appeared to be a very large crowd at the airport and most of the people were restrained behind a chain-link fence which was about four or five feet high. On the opposite side of the fence from the crowd there was a very narrow sidewalk and curbing which ran along the fence-line.

There were several people on the same side of the fence as the President but most of them were photographers.

As soon as the President and First Lady disembarked from the Aircraft, Mrs. Kennedy was presented a bouquet of roses. The President was also presented what appeared to be two hand-drawn charcoal portraits of himself and Mrs. Kennedy in a black leather and glass folding frame. I believe that this was given to him by a lady wearing a red coat.

Just after the President received the black leather frame I held out my hand and he handed it to me. I had been standing just off to Mrs. Kennedy's left, slightly in front of her. She was on the left side of the President.

At this time the President and First Lady started walking towards the crowd which was restrained behind the fence. On the way, they did stop for a few seconds to talk to an elderly lady in a wheel chair who was on the field area about thirty feet from where the above presentations were made.

They then walked over to the crowd and walked along the fence from their right to their left. At first I was in front of the President, clearing a pathway through the photographers and observing the crowd reaching over the fence;

[redacted]

but I noticed that Mrs. Kennedy was moving along slower and becoming separated from the President so I asked another agent, I don't recall who, to move up where I was and I dropped back to assist Special Agent Clinton Hill who was next to Mrs. Kennedy. I continued to keep a pathway clear for Mrs. Kennedy, removing small hand signs that had been dropped in her pathway on the sidewalk and occasionally cautioning to watch out for the curbing. At one point, where the direction of the fence made a right angle turn to the left of the way we were moving, I do remember reaching up and holding a fairly large flag away that someone was waving over the fence. Only a few feet further and the fence and sidewalk made another 90 degree turn in the direction in which we were originally moving.

At this point we stopped momentarily and started in the direction of the cars which were slightly behind us and had been moving along towards us. Mrs. Kennedy asked where the President was and SA Hill noticed him continuing along the fence shaking hands with the crowd; so Mrs. Kennedy returned to the fence and did the same.

Only a short distance later the President and First Lady stopped shaking hands and entered their automobile. I stood by the right rear side until the car started moving and then hopped on the right rear portion of the right running board of the Follow-up car. I was standing with my right leg on the running board and my left leg up over and inside the Follow-up car. I stayed in this position until we were leaving the Airport area and remarked that, "I might as well get all the way in," and I did so. I glanced at my watch but I don't recall the time.

Special Agents Glen Bennett and George Hickey were seated to my left respectively in the rear of the Follow-up car. Mr. David Powers was seated directly in front of me in the center portion of the Follow-up car and Mr. Kenneth O'Donnell was seated on Mr. Power's left. Special Agent Sam Kinney was driving and ATSAIC Roberts was seated in the right front seat. Special Agents John Ready, Clinton Hill, and Tim McIntyre were standing on the right front, left front, and left rear portions of the running board, respectively.

The motorcade had not proceeded far when ATSAIC Roberts asked me to get back on the outside running board, "Just in case," which I immediately did. The crowd was about two-deep along each side of the road and I would guess that we were traveling about twenty miles per hour.

As the motorcade proceeded towards the main business section of downtown Dallas I watched the crowd for anyone trying to run towards the President's car or any person who might be holding anything harmful in his hands. I observed the rooftops and windows of the buildings along the route. On the outskirts of town most of the buildings were of a one or two story type structure and very few people were on the rooftops. The crowd was three or more deep along the street as we proceeded towards downtown Dallas with most intersections more heavily crowded. The outskirts seemed to consist mostly of used car lots, junk

dealers, auto parts stores, and this typical type of neighborhood. At one intersection there were some Cuban Pickets but I don't recall exactly what their signs said except that they did have "Cuba" on them.

A little further towards town some people had a sign asking the President to please stop and shake hands, which he saw as he passed and stopped. I immediately ran up to his car as it stopped and assumed a position next to him and observed the crowd as it merged on the car, especially watching the hands. Most of the people were children but I do remember one of the adult ladies who was holding the sign, remarking, "It worked, our sign worked!"

At various places along the route I remember Mr. Dave Powers standing up and taking movies of the President's car and the crowd.

The closer we came to downtown Dallas the larger the crowds became. At several places they were forcing their way into the street and there was just barely enough room for the cars to get through. There were two motorcycle escorts on each side of the President's and the Follow-up car and in several instances the crowd was so close that the motorcycles could not get through and had to drop completely behind the Follow-up car. During these instances SA Clint Hill would run up and jump on the left rear bumper of the President's car and he would ride there until the crowd was further back away from the President's car.

Just before we reached the heart of downtown Dallas, I remember noticing some new looking, very high, multi-storied skyscrapers and I remarked to Jack Ready that there were even people way up on the roof of one. I think the motorcade made a right turn onto Main Street, as that is the only street sign I saw and remembered. I remember thinking to myself that about every town I know of has a Main Street.

I'm not sure how far we traveled on Main Street, but I do know that this is where the crowd seemed heaviest. The buildings were tall on both sides of the street but I didn't notice many people in the windows. I continued to scan the crowds on the street and the buildings along the route. I glanced at the President's car somewhere along Main Street and saw Clint Hill again standing on the left rear bumper behind Mrs. Kennedy who was seated to the President's left. Governor Connally was seated in front of the President and Mrs. Connally was in front of Mrs. Kennedy.

The crowd lined both sides of the street and in several places was right out into the street leaving barely enough room to get through.

Not long after we turned onto Main Street there was one boy who, I would say, was in his early teens who ran out from the crowd after the President's and Follow-up cars had passed and tried to overtake the President's car. I saw him coming and tapped SA Ready on the shoulder and pointed towards him. He was carrying a camera. SA Ready jumped off the running board, overtook the boy and pushed him back into the crowd.

When we reached the end of Main Street we turned right and approached a gradual left turn. As we approached the intersection and while we were turning left, the crowd seemed to thin and almost disappear around the turn. I then made a quick surveillance of a building which was to be on the President's right once the left turn was completed. It appeared to be the last one in sight. It was a modernistic type building, approximately eight stories high, and it had large glass windows. I also seem to recollect orange paneling or siding. None of the windows were open, and I did not see anyone standing by them. I surmised that the building was closed or that all its employees were out on the street corner.

As the President's car continued around the corner, I continued to survey the crowd along the righthand side of the road and noticed that it was fairly scattered, with hardly enough people to form a single line. I continued to look ahead to an overpass over the route we were traveling. At approximately this point, I would say, the President's car and the Follow-up car had just completed their turns and both were straightening out.

At this moment I heard what sounded like the report of a high-powered rifle from behind me, over my right shoulder. When I heard the sound there was no question in my mind what it was. My first glance was at the President, as I was practically looking in his direction anyway. I saw him moving in a manner which I thought was to look in the direction of the sound. I did not realize that President Kennedy had been shot at this point.

I immediately returned my gaze, over my right shoulder, toward the modernistic building I had observed before. With a quick glance I saw nothing and immediately started scanning the crowd at the intersection from my right to my left. I observed nothing unusual and began to think that the sound had been that of a fire cracker but I hadn't seen any smoke. In fact, I recall Special Agent Jack Ready saying, "What was it? A Fire Cracker?" I remarked, "I don't know; I don't see any smoke." So far the lapsed period of time could not have been over two or three seconds.

All during this time I continued to scan the crowd, returning my gaze towards the President's car. It must have been another second or two before the next shot was fired because, as I recall having seen nothing out of the ordinary, I then thought that maybe one of the cars in the motorcade had had a blowout that had echoed off the buildings. I looked at the right front tire of the President's car and saw it was all right. I then glanced to see the right rear tire, but could not because the Follow-up car was too close.

I also thought of trying to run and jump on the President's car but did not think I could make it because of the speed at which we were traveling. I decided I had better stay where I was so that I would at least be near the First Lady, to whom I am assigned. I think that it was at this point that I thought, "Faster, Faster, Faster," thinking that we could not get out of the area soon enough. However, I don't have any idea as to how fast we were then moving.

Page Five of Statement of Special Agent Paul E. Landis, Jr., dated Nov. 30, 1963:

I had drawn my gun, but I am not sure exactly when I did this. I did leave my suit coat unbuttoned all during the motorcade movement, thinking at the time that I could get to my gun faster this way, if I had to.

I glanced towards the President and he still appeared to be fairly upright in his seat, leaning slightly toward Mrs. Kennedy with his head tilted slightly back. I think Mrs. Kennedy had her right arm around the President's shoulders at this time. I also remember Special Agent Clinton Hill attempting to climb onto the back of the President's car.

It was at this moment that I heard a second report and it appeared that the President's head split open with a muffled exploding sound. I can best describe the sound as I heard it, as the sound you would get by shooting a high powered bullet into a five gallon can of water or shooting into a mellon. I saw pieces of flesh and blood flying through the air and the President slumped out of sight towards Mrs. Kennedy.

The time lapse between the first and second report must have been about four or five seconds.

My immediate thought was that the President could not possibly be alive after being hit like he was. I still was not certain from which direction the second shot came, but my reaction at this time was that the shot came from somewhere towards the front, right-hand side of the road.

I did not notice anyone on the overpass, and I scanned the area to the right of and below the overpass where the terrain sloped towards the road on which we were traveling. The only person I recall seeing clearly was a Negro male in light green slacks and a beige colored shirt running from my left to right, up the slope, across a grassy section, along a sidewalk, towards some steps and what appeared to be a low stone wall. He was bent over while running and I started to point towards him, but I didn't notice anything in his hands and by this time we were going under the overpass at a very high rate of speed. I was looking back and saw a motorcycle policeman stopping along the curb approximately adjacent to where I saw the Negro running.

After we rode under the overpass I again looked at the President's car and saw Special Agent Clint Hill lying across the trunk. He was looking back towards the Follow-up car shaking his head back and forth and gave a thumbs-down sign with his hand.

ATSAIC Roberts asked if anyone got the exact time of the shooting and someone said "about 12:30 p.m.;" then someone told me to get inside the car and pulled me by the arm. My sun glasses fell off and Special Agent Bennett handed them to me. By now we were on an Expressway and a few people were standing in spots along the way waving as we went by.

ATSAIC Roberts was telling the other agents in the Follow-up car to cover Vice-President Johnson as soon as we stopped.

Sometime around 12:37 p.m. we arrived at Parkland Memorial Hospital. I immediately ran to the left rear side of the President's car, reached over and tried to help Mrs. Kennedy up by taking hold of her shoulders. She did not want to let go of President Kennedy whose head she held in her lap and she was bending over him. She said something like, "No, I want to stay with him!"

Agent Hill had in the meantime opened the left rear door of the Presidential Convertible, stepped inside and took Mrs. Kennedy by the arm. She released the President and someone said, "Cover up his head." Agent Hill took off his suit coat and covered up the President's head. I also remember Mr. Powers leaning in the car and saying, "Oh, No!, Mr. President! Mr. President!"

By this time someone was lifting the President's body out of the right side of the car. Agent Hill helped Mrs. Kennedy out of the car, and I followed. Mrs. Kennedy's purse and hat and a cigarette lighter were on the back seat. I picked these three items up as I walked through the car and followed Mrs. Kennedy into the hospital.

The President's body was taken directly to an Emergency Room, and I think I remember Mrs. Kennedy following the people in but coming out almost immediately. The door to the Emergency Room was closed and I stayed by Mrs. Kennedy's side. Someone, in the meantime, had brought a chair for Mrs. Kennedy to sit in and she sat just outside of the Emergency Room. There were several people milling around and with the help of a nurse we cleared all unauthorized personnel out of the immediate area.

Someone came out of the Room that the President was in and asked if anyone knew his Blood Type. ASAIC Kellerman and SA Hill immediately reached for their wallets. ASAIC Kellerman gave the man the information first.

At one point someone else came out of the President's Room again and said he was still breathing. Mrs. Kennedy stood up and said, "Do you mean he may live?" No one answered.

Most of the time while in the hospital I stayed right next to Mrs. Kennedy. Twice, I believe, she went into the Room where the President was; however I remained outside by the door. A short time later I still remember several people standing around, and I asked a doctor for help in clearing the area.

At approximately 2:00 p.m. the President's body was wheeled from the hospital in a coffin into an ambulance. Special Agent Andrew Berger drove the ambulance; ASAIC Kellerman and ATSAIC Stout were in the front seat. Mrs. Kennedy, Admiral Burkley, and Agent Hill rode in the rear of the ambulance with the President's body.

I rode in the Follow-up car behind the ambulance which departed the hospital at 2:04 p.m.

At 2:14 p.m., the President's body arrived at Love Field Airport and several Secret Service agents immediately carried it on board U. S. Air Force No. One via the rear door. I followed on board behind Mrs. Kennedy and then moved to the forward section of the plane. I witnessed the swearing in of President Johnson at 2:39 p.m. in the center compartment on board Air Force #1, and at 2:47 p.m. departed Love Field Airport, Dallas, Texas, via Air Force No. One, with Mrs. Kennedy and the body of the late President Kennedy.

Upon our arrival at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., at 5:58 p.m. I helped carry the late President Kennedy's coffin from Air Force #1. The body was placed in an ambulance which departed Andrews Air Force Base at approximately 6:10 p.m., driven by Special Agent William Greer. ASAIC Kellerman, Admiral Burkley, and I rode in the front seat of the ambulance. Mrs. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy rode in the rear of the ambulance with President Kennedy's body.

The above party arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Md., at approximately 6:55 p.m. Special Agent Hill and I escorted Mrs. Kennedy to the 17th Floor where we immediately secured the area. Only hospital personnel assigned to the area, Kennedy family members and friends, and authorized personnel were allowed in the area.

I only left the 17th Floor twice while Mrs. Kennedy was there. Once, to find ASAIC Kellerman in the hospital morgue and give him a telephone message from Chief Rowley. The other time was to find a White House driver.

At 3:56 a.m., on November 23, 1963, Mrs. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy departed Bethesda Naval Hospital via ambulance, accompanying the late President John F. Kennedy's body to the White House. Special Agent William Greer was driving and ASAIC Kellerman accompanied. Special Agent Clinton Hill rode in the first limousine behind the ambulance and I rode in the second limousine

The above Party arrived at the White House at 4:24 a.m.

Paul E. Landis Jr.

Paul E. Landis, Jr.
Special Agent
U. S. Secret Service

Confidential